

Message Text

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PAGE 01 YAOUND 00898 091800Z

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 SS-15

NSC-05 L-03 SY-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /054 W

----- 059315

O R 091645Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7991

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 0898

E.D. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, EK

SUBJ: DIPLOMATIC PSEUDO-INCIDENT WITH EQUATORIAL GUINEA

1. SUMMARY. UPON MY DEPARTURE FROM FIVE DAY STAY IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA, MY ESCORT, ACTING CHIEF OF PROTOCOL IN PRESIDENCY, SANTIAGO NSOBIYA NCHAMA, MADE SPEECH AND HANDED ME PERSONAL DOCUMENT ACCUSING ME OF BEING CIA SPY, AND SECRETARY KISSENGER AND ME OF BEING CRIMINALS AND ASSASINS. DOCUMENT UNLIKELY TO HAVE BEEN PREPARED WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF PRESIDENT MACIAS AND MAY PORTEND MORE PUBLIC AND OFFICIAL ACTION, LIKE PNG'ING OF AMBASSADOR AND/OR BROAD ATTACKS ON US. END SUMMARY

2. CONSUL MITHOEFER AND I SPENT LAST FIVE DAYS IN EG, IN RESPONSE TO EG GOVERNMENT'S SUGGESTION THAT BEST TIME FOR MY VISIT TO RIO MUNI WOULD BE FOR MARCH 5 VICTORY OVER COLONIALISM FESTIVITIES. WE WERE WELL RECEIVED, PRESIDENT SEEMED EVIDENTLY PLEASED THAT I WAS ONLY NON-RESIDENT AMBASSADOR TO ATTEND AND ONLY ONE TO HAVE TRAVELLED OVERLAND. HIS TWO SPEECHES ON MARCH 5 WERE MODERATE. SPEECH AT PANAFRICAN PEOPLE'S PALACE EVENING OF MARCH 5 WAS ADDRESSED MAINLY TO SOVIET, CHINESE, AND US AMBASSADORS, WHO SEATED AT HEAD OF TABLE BELOW MACIAS'. HIS MESSAGE WAS THAT THE MOST POWERFUL COUNTRIES HAD TO HELP THE WEAK DEVELOPING ONES, INSTEAD OF QUARRELING AMONG THEMSELVES AND WASTING MONEY ON ARMS RACE.

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3. AFTER WE TOLD ACTING CHIEF OF PROTOCOL IN PRESIDENCY SANTIAGO

WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN COUNTRY, ARRANGEMENT WAS MADE, ALLEGEDLY ON PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE, FOR US TO MAKE FLYING TRIP MARCH TO FRENCH-MANAGED LUMBER COMPANY. SANTIAGO AND FRENCH MANAGER ACCOMPANIED US ON THIS TRIP. WE STATED THAT WE WANTED TO DRIVE BACK TO YAOUNDE ON MONDAY, BUT WERE TOLD BY SANTIAGO THAT PRESIDENT WANTED ME TO VISIT HIS HOMETOWN AND SPEND NIGHT THERE BEFORE LEAVING EG ON MARCH 9.

4. TRIP ON MARCH 8 WENT OFF SMOOTHLY, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE VARIOUS DELAYS AND SANTIAGO HAD US IGNORE SCHOOL CHILDREN WHO HAD BEEN LINED UP TO CHEER AND CHANT "TODO POR MACIAS." ON MORNING OF MARCH 9, AFTER SHORT TOUR OF PRESIDENT'S HOME TOWN AND BRIEF RECEPTION BY GOVERNMENT DELEGATE IN BORDER TOWN, WE DROVE TO EG-CAMEROON BORDER, WITH SANTIAGO AS ALWAYS IN MY CAR, PRECEDED BY PRESIDENTIAL LANDROVER DRIVEN BY A SUB-LIEUTENANT WHO HAD BEEN ALONG ON MOST OF CAR TRIP. AT 1030 HOURS LOCAL, AT BORDER, WE ALL GOT OUT, SANTIAGO PRODUCED A FIVE PAGE DOCUMENT (SEPTOL) AND BEGAN TO READ PARTS OF IT IN HIS FAULTY ENGLISH, WHICH HE THEN REPEATED IN SPANISH FOR BENEFIT OF TWO OTHER EQUATORIAL GUINEANS PRESENT.

5. SANTIAGO'S LITTLE SPEECH SAID THAT HE HAD WRITTEN LETTER AS A MODEST FUNCTIONARY, BUT IF HE WERE CHIEF OF STATE HE WOULD DECLARE ME PNG. HE COULD NOT CALL ME AMBASSADOR WITHOUT ALSO CALLING ME ASSASSIN. I HAD, HE CLAIMED, REMARKED UPON THE FACT THAT A DINNER PLATE AT LUMBER CAMP WAS "MADE IN CHINA" AND THEREFORE CALLED EG COMMUNISTS. (FYI: I NEVER CALLED ANYONE COMMUNIST DURING TRIP). BUT PRESIDENT NIXON HAD VISITED CHINA BOTH IN AND OUT OF OFFICE. WAS HE A COMMUNIST? THE CRIMINAL AND ASSASSIN KISSINGER HAD VISITED CHINA. WAS HE A COMMUNIST? EVERYTHING THAT EG HAD BUILT SINCE INDEPENDENCE WAS PAID FOR IN EG CURRENCY, AND I HAD SEEN ALL THESE THINGS WITH MY OWN EYES. MITHOEFER AND I, HE WENT ON, HAD ASKED HIM SPYING QUESTIONS DURING CAR TRIP AND I WAS A CIA SPY.

6. OUTBURST CAME AS SURPRISE. WHEN HE HANDED ME PAPER HE MADE BEELINE FOR LANDROVER, AND I BARELY HAD OPPORTUNITY TO TELL HIM THAT WE WERE GUESTS OF HIS PRESIDENT, THAT I WANTED HIM TO GIVE PRESIDENT APPROPRIATELY INSCRIBED COPY OF MY BOOK "RESPONSIBILITY IN GOVERNMENT," AND THAT QUESTIONS WE HAD ASKED HIM - E.G. ARE ALL MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT MEMBERS OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE (YES), HAD HE EVER VISITED US (NO) - WERE ABOUT MATTERS WHICH PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE IN OPEN CONFIDENTIAL

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SOCIETY OF US.

7. WE HAVE EVIDENCE WHICH PROVES THAT LARGE PARTS OF DOCUMENT WERE PREPARED BEFORE MY ARRIVAL IN EG ON MARCH 4. IT STATES, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT I AND MY WIFE HAD SEEN NEW PUBLIC WORKS WITH OUR OWN EYES. MY WIFE WAS ORIGINALLY TO ACCOMPANY ME ON TRIP, BUT DID NOT. IT ALSO REFERS TO SPANISH-OPERATED LUMBER CAMPS AS HAVING BEEN VISITED BY US, WHICH WE DID NOT IN FACT VISIT. WE CONCLUDE THAT MOST OF THE

DOCUMENT WAS PREPARED BEFORE OUR DEPARTURE FROM BATA AT 11 AM LOCAL MARCH 8, AND THAT THIS WAS REASON FOR TWO-HOUR DELAY IN DEPARTURE. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT YOUNG THOUGH ZEALOUS FUNCTIONNARY LIKE SANTIAGO WOULD HAVE PREPARED DOCUMENT WITHOUT PRESIDENT'S KNOWLEDGE OR EVEN DIRECTION. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT MACIAS ET AL WERE SETTING US UP FOR AN INCIDENT, BUT OUR CORRECT BEHAVIOR MADE THAT IMPOSSIBLE.

8. WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ABOUT MOTIVES. GDR CHARGE TOLD ME (SEPTTEL) THAT COMMUNIST STATES HAVE VERY HARD TIME AIDING EG IN EFFECTIVE WAYS,

BECAUSE GOVERNMENT HAS NO FOREIGN ADVISERS WHATEVER, IS VERY DIS-TRUSTFUL OF ALL FOREIGNERS, AND PUTS ALL ITS MONEY INTO NON-PRODUCTIVE

OBJECTS LIKE PALACE AND BANK. SPAIN IS RAPIDLY CEASING TO BE VIABLE WHIPPING BOY. MACIAS IS WELL KNOWN FOR HIS PARANOIA. IN MARCH 5 MORNING SPEECH HE DENIED THAT THERE WERE ANY PROBLEMS BETWEEN EG AND EITHER GABON OR NIGERIA. HE MAY WANT TO SET UP US AS NEW OUTSIDE ENEMY AND MAY BE PLANNING TO PNG ME ON BASIS OF ALLEGED SPYING DURING THIS TRIP.

9. AS I SEE IT, WE HAVE THREE BASIC OPTIONS.

A. DO NOTHING, AND WAIT AND SEE. OUR ONLY CURREENT CONTACTS WITH EG CONSIST OF OCCASIONAL TRIPS BY AMBASSADOR AND/OR CONSUL IN DOUALA. I HAVE MADE TWO IN MY HALF YEAR HERE. WE HAVE NO INTERESTS IN EG, AND ARE UNLIKELY TO PERSUADE THEM EVER TO VOTE WITH US AT UN - THOUGH I WORKED ON EG PERMREP TO UN DURING MARCH 5 DINNER WITH RESPECT TO PUERTO RICO (SEPTTEL). ADVANTAGE OF THIS NON-ACTION WOULD BE THAT WE WOULD NOT DIGNIFY PETTY OUTBURST BY SANTIAGO, OFFICIAL OF PITIABLE TYRANNY, WITH OFFICIAL US REACTION. DISADVANTAGE WOULD BE THAT INITIATIVE IS LEFT TO MACIAS AND HE CAN FEEL THAT HE IS HAVING IT BOTH WAYS, AND GOT AWAY WITH INSULT TO PERSONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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REPRESENTATIVE OF PRESIDENT AND TO SECRETARY OF STATE BY HIDING BEHIND HIS CHIEF OF PROTOCOL.

B. SEND NOTE TO MACIAS WITH COPY OF DOCUMENT ATTACHED, CALLING IT AND MANNER OF ITS DELIVERY BY MY OFFICIAL ESCORT CLEARLY UNACCEPTABLE,

DEMANDING THAT HE DISSOCIATE HIMSELF FROM DOCUMENT AND DISCIPLINE HIS CHIEF OF PROTOCOL. ADVANTAGE WOULD BE REVERSE OF DISADVANTAGE UNDER

OPTION A. DISADVANTAGE WOULD BE, INTER ALIA, THAT MACIAS COULD STILL BLOW UP MANUFACTURED INCIDENT INVOLVING, AND CHARGES AGAINST, US. WE WOULD ALSO HAVE TO CONSIDER HOW TO DELIVER THE NOTE, WHETHER THROUGH EG AMBASSADOR IN YAOUNDE, AT UN, OR BY HAVING MITHOEFER GO TO EG.

C. BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH EG ON GROUNDS OF THE UNACCEPTABLE ACTION WHICH MUST HAVE HAD APPROVAL OF MACIAS. ADVANTAGE WOULD LIE IN TAKING INITIATIVE, ESPECIALLY ON PNG'ING, AWAY FROM MACIAS. WE WOULD ALSO UNBURDEN OURSELVES OF WHAT IS LIKELY TO BECOME AN INCREASING NUISANCE. WE COULD, NOW OR LATER, LINK RUPTURE WITH REPEATED FLAGRANT EG VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AN ISSUE ON WHICH NIGERIA AND EG EXILED OPPOSITION, WITH CLOSE LINKS TO WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, WOULD AGREE WITH US. DISADVANTAGE WOULD BE LENDING DIGNITY TO PURPORTEDLY NON-OFFICIAL PETTY ACTION, PLUS FACT THAT MACIAS COULD STILL BLOW THE THING UP BY CHARGING WE BROKE RELATIONS ONLY AFTER WE KNOW THAT HE WOULD EXPOSE AND PNG ME. IN ANY EVENT, IF WE CHOOSE OPTION C, WE SHOULD DO IT ASAP FOR OPTIMUM EFFECT. IN THIS CASE, WE WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER HOW TO NOTIFY EG, THROUGH PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OR VIA ONE OF MEANS IN B ABOVE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL HARASSMENT, ALLEGATIONS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976YAOUND00898
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760089-0246
From: YAOUNDE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760378/aaaacqti.tel
Line Count: 184
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 MAR 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <07 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DIPLOMATIC PSEUDO-INCIDENT WITH EQUATORIAL GUINEA
TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, EK, (MACIAS NGUEMA, FRANCISCO), (NCHAMA, SANTIAGO NSOBIYA), (SPIRO, HERBERT J), (MITHOEFER, WILLIAM C)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006